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RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1945

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

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RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1945

Health Department
Town Hall,
Bridgwater.

August 1946.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Fifth Annual Report on the health of the Rural District. The report is in the same abbreviated form as its recent predecessors.

With the exception of the infant mortality rate which has risen from 46.2 to 54.88 the vital statistics show little change on the previous year's figures. The number of cases of infectious diseases notified during the year was extremely low.

I would commend for your particular attention the summary of the work done by the Sanitary Inspector in connection with the Rural Housing Survey. This shows that of 474 houses, the number classified as "unfit and cannot be repaired at a reasonable expense" was as high as 227. Such figures show that the housing problem of the rural district is probably just as great as those of many urban areas.

I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their support, Mr. Maile and his assistants for their excellent cooperation, and the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the year.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,

G.H, PRINGLE.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1945

Area (acres)	86,608
Population (Registrar General's estimate)	18,770
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December 1945	5,406
Rateable value on 31st December 1945	£84,699
Sum represented by a 1d. rate	£ 359.9.9

Live Births

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	164	150	314
Illegitimate	23	11	34
	187	161	348

Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 18.54

Still Births ... ... Total 9
Still birth rate per 1,000 total (live & still) births 28.73

Death Rate - Total number of deaths 233
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 12.41
No comparability factor available for 1945. The above uncorrected rate would probably be appreciably lower if corrected for age and sex distribution.

Puerperal Deaths

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 Births
From Puerperal Sepsis	0	0
From other Maternal Causes	2	5.60

Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age.)

Legitimate	16
Illegitimate	3
	19

Rate for all infants per 1,000 live births	46.2
Rate for all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	50.95
Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	88.23

Other Deaths

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	29
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	1
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	1

Causes of Death during 1945

Cause of Death	M	F	Total
All causes	129	104	233
1. Typhoid and para-typhoid fevers	-	-	-
2. Cerebro-spinal fever	-	-	-
3. Scarlet Fever	-	-	-
4. Whooping Cough	1	-	1
5. Diphtheria	-	-	-
6. Tuberculosis of respiratory system	1	5	6
7. Other forms of tuberculosis	-	-	-
8. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
9. Influenza	-	1	1
10. Measles	-	-	-
11. Acute poliomyelitis and polioencephalitis	-	1	1
12. Acute infantile encephalitis	-	-	-
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus (m) uterus (f)	3	-	3
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum	1	2	3
15. Cancer of breast	-	3	3
16. Cancer of all other sites	14	6	20
17. Diabetes	4	1	5
18. Intra-cranial vascular lesions	14	19	33
19. Heart disease	32	20	52
20. Other diseases of the circulatory system	-	3	3
21. Bronchitis	10	1	11
22. Pnuemonia	5	4	9
23. Other respiratory diseases	2	1	3
24. Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	2	1	3
25. Diarrhoea under 2 years	0	1	1
26. Appendicitis	-	-	-
27. Other Digestive diseases	3	5	8
28. Nephritis	5	4	9
29. Puerperal and post-abortion sepsis	-	-	-
30. Other maternal causes	-	2	2
31. Premature births	7	3	10
32. Congenital malformation, birth injuries infantile diseases	2	2	4
33. Suicide	-	-	-
34. Road Traffic accidents	1	1	2
35. Other violent causes	3	1	4
36. All other causes	19	17	36

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable diseases that occurred in the Rural District during 1945. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioners or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals:-

Disease.	
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	-
Acute Poliomyelitis	3
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	2
Diphtheria	4
Dysentery	2
Enteric Fever (including paratyphoid)	-
Erysipelas	4
Measles	104
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-
Pneumonia	6
Puerperal Pyrexia	2
Scarlet Fever	17
Small Pox	-
Whooping Cough	18
	162

Small-pox contacts

During the past few years one or more cases of small-pox have arisen on board a number of homeward bound ships. Contacts of such cases who are allowed to proceed to their destinations are kept under surveillance for a period of 14 days after arrival.

This most important precaution has again necessitated a considerable number of visits to contacts whose homes are in the Rural District.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year:-

Age under 5 years	Age 5 - 15 years	Total
324	81	405

As in previous years each village or a special centre serving groups of villages, was visited once or twice during the year, or whenever there were sufficient children to warrant a special visit. Once again I wish to record my thanks for the valuable assistance I have received from District Nurses, School Teachers, and voluntary helpers.

A regular weekly diphtheria immunisation clinic is held in Bridgwater, and parents resident in the Rural District can attend at this clinic if unable to be present at their local centre.

The best method of protection is to give each child two immunising injections at one year of age, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life.

Tuberculosis

There were 32 cases of respiratory and 3 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year.

Scabies

The number of Rural District cases of scabies treated at the Old Isolation hospital was as follows:-

Male Adults	20
Female Adults	46
Children	84
	150

No changes have been made in the treatment arrangements which continue to function satisfactorily.

The total number of cases treated is approximately the same as last year.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water

Full details of the various sources of supply were given in last year's report.

The Water Engineer reports:- "Following the severe weather in January - February 1945, considerable difficulties were experienced in maintaining a supply due entirely to defective service pipes - hundreds of leaks were discovered and repaired.

Apart from this no shortage was reported throughout the district at any time."

Mr. Clatworthy also states that approval has been received for the duplication of approximately one mile of water main around Dancing Hill and the provision of a booster station at Crandon Bridge.

11. Sewerage Disposal

The Council's Consulting Engineers have surveyed the whole district and following the presentation of a comprehensive report the various Parishes in the Rural District have been arranged in order of urgency and the work will proceed on the lines suggested in the report.

111. Sanitary Inspection of the Area

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1945

Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1945

This Report is again very much abbreviated and should be considered only as a summary of the work carried out during the year.

Staff.

Mr. A. A. Kemmish, formerly Junior Assistant, was released from H. M. Forces and resumed duty in October as Temporary Additional Sanitary Inspector.

Mr. R. J. Organ was transferred to the Department in March 1945.

Both these officers are mainly employed on the Rural Housing Survey

Complaints and Nuisances

The number of complaints investigated during the year was 94, an increase of 12 on the previous year. In many cases nuisances were abated as the result of informal action but it was found necessary to serve 4 Abatement Notices, a decrease of 5 on 1944. A number of complaints were found to be not justified and no action was taken in regard to them.

Of the nuisances found, 76 were abated during the year, altogether increasing difficulty was again experienced in getting work carried out, owing to extreme shortage of labour and building materials. In many cases it was necessary to extend the time limit set out in notices, in order to give owners of property the fullest opportunity of abating the nuisances. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 371. In one case Court proceedings were instituted, and the Justices made a Nuisance Order.

Housing.

The number of houses inspected under the Housing Acts was 569. 12 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost and Demolition Orders were made by the Council in 9 cases. In two cases the Council accepted undertakings from the owners to carry out approved works within a stipulated time, and in two further cases where the houses were under the control of the Commissioners of Crown Lands the Commissioners undertook that the houses would not be re-let when they were vacated by the present tenants. Three houses the subject of Demolition Orders were demolished during the year.

Considerable difficulty was found in getting housing repairs dealth with, but in a number of cases minor repairs and improvements were carried out.

The general condition of house property has further deteriorated during the year and it is evident that the lack of ordinary maintenance work during the war years will result in an increased number of condemnations in the near future. This will have the effect of increasing the serious shortage, of housing accommodation in the District. This tendency is particularly noticeable in the case of houses with "cob" walls, where in several instances recently cases have occured where neglect to repair defective rainwater guttering, etc. has caused progressive dampness in the fabric resulting in the collapse of a wall.

During the year thirteen Certificates of Essentiality were issued in respect of work on twelve houses at an estimated cost of £3,175.10.0. Several applications for Certificates of Essentiality had to be refused by reason of the fact that the proposed work, although obviously essential and urgent, did not come within the scope of the scheme as set out in Ministry of Health Circular No. 2871.

The scheme for the Control of Civil Building under Defence Regulation 56A came into operation on 1st August 1945, and up to the end of the year 236 building licences were issued. This work has put a considerable strain on the Department, and necessitated some relaxation of effort in other work, particularly the Rural Housing Survey. 250 visits were made in connection with applications for building licences.

46 plans for structural alterations and additions to dwelling houses were approved during the year, and the work was inspected in progress. 312 visits were made to new work.

The Rural Housing Survey was commenced in March and at the end of the year 474 houses had been inspected and classified as follows:-

Categories:-	1. Satisfactory in all respects.	1.
	2. Minor defects	29.
	3. Repairs or structural alterations	217.
	4. Suitable for Housing (R.W.) Acts.	51.
	4a. Suitable for acquisition	-
	5. Unfit and cannot be repaired at a reasonable expense	227.

Houses in Category 4 are, of course, also placed in one of the other categories.

Overcrowding.

Five new cases of overcrowding were discovered during the year, four of which were abated by informal action.

Eighteen visits were made in connection with overcrowding.

Bakehouses.

Fifteen visits were made to bakehouses, and informal notices served were duly complied with. Four bakehouses changed ownership during the year

General Sanitation.

The following improvements were carried out, generally as the result of informal action:-

W.C.'s	37.
Baths.	13.
Sinks	24.

Drainage systems	27
Lavatory Basins	11
Connections to water main	7
Connections to sewer	3
New sculleries	6
New urinals at public houses	2

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

Meat and Food.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and 113 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has been found to be justified. 298 visits were made for this purpose.

I give below details of food condemned during the year:-

Beasts.

2 carcases and organs.
28 lbs. Beef.
2 sets lungs.

Sheep.

3 carcases and organs.
20 lbs. Mutton.
1 Head.
1 liver.

Pigs.

1 carcase and organs.
28 heads and tongues
29 mesenteries and intestines.
4 plucks
3 sets lungs.
2 livers.
40 lbs. Pork.

Other Foods.

58 tins of various foods.
26 lbs. cheese
68 lbs. jam.
51 lbs. bacon

Milk and Dairies.

The number of inspections carried out during the year was 317, a decrease of 261 on the previous year. The reduction in the number of inspections was due to concentration of effort on housing inspections under the Rural Housing Survey and to the large amount of time which had to be devoted to the licensing of Civil Building work.

The number of producers on the register at the end of 1945 was 807 including 136 producer retailers. The number of producers of T.T. milk was 20 and there were also 24 producers of Accredited milk. The number of retail purveyors of milk was 16.

The sampling of designated milk was continued during the year 207 samples of T.T. and Accredited milk being taken, of which 96 were reported to be unsatisfactory. In addition 7 samples of heat-treated milk were taken, one of which was reported to be unsatisfactory.

45 samples of milk were taken for testing for the presence of Tubercle Bacilli, and 1 sample was found to give a positive result. Appropriate action was taken in this case by the County Council

20 new registrations were granted during the year, 18 for wholesale purveyors, 1 for wholesale and retail purveyors, and one for retail purveyor.

The effort made to get improved conditions at dairy farms during the year, produced the following results:-

New cowshed floors and improved drainage	11
New Cowsheds	3
New dairies	11
Main water supply to cowsheds ...	2
Cowsheds rebuilt	2
Improved lighting and ventilation ...	1

Moveable Dwellings.

Further difficulty was experienced during the year in the supervision of moveable dwellings occupied by seasonal workers such as pea pickers and fruit pickers. These workers who are usually of the gipsy type, are employed by fruit and vegetable dealers who permit them to camp in fields which are owned by the dealers. The workers have their own moveable dwellings and the dealers usually provide rough sanitary conveniences of the bucket or pit type. The habits of these workers are often objectionable and they usually fail to use any sanitary conveniences which may be provided for them, with the result that the camp and its surroundings become extremely foul. These workers are usually in the district from May to August each year and many complaints are received from residents in the vicinity of the camps.

79 visits were made during the year in connection with moveable dwellings and two prosecutions were instituted against dealers for permitting camping for more that 42 consecutive days without being in possession of a licence authorising the land to be so used.

In both cases the prosecutions were successful.

Infectious Diseases

54 disinfections were carried out during the year 72 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases.

Verminous Premises.

19 visits were made to verminous premises an 8 dwellings were treated for vermin; in addition 25 visits were made in connection with rodent infestation.

A Rodent Operative was appointed and commenced duty in December.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

F.A. MAILE.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.